

HAPSBURG'S LUST FOR DOMAIN REAL CAUSE OF WAR

Prince Hrebelianovich Reviews Situation and Conditions and Says Present Conflict Is Austria's Last Desperate and Ruthless Attempt to Crush Out Serbia

By PRINCE LAZAROVICH HREBELIANOVICH,
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THE present war began by the Austrian Empire against the small neighboring independent kingdom of Serbia under a pretext hardly less flimsy than "get out of your place, I want it," cynically showing all Europe into peril of universal bloodshed, is a war not only against the Serbian kingdom but against the Serbian race, "a war of extermination." It is the logical outcome of a situation and conditions in the Austro-Hungarian Empire which are fundamentally unsound and pernicious.

Austria-Hungary is a conglomeration brought about by conquests of territories and bits of territories inhabited by fragments of nations whose racial and national centers, with but two exceptions, lie outside of Austro-Hungarian borders in neighboring States on east, west, north and south.

This conglomeration of peoples and lands without common interests is ruled by and for the sole benefit of one family, the Hapsburg dynasty, whose motto is "Plus Ultra"—"Austria East Imperator Universo" (Austria East is the right to rule the universe)—a motto which is inscribed on the palaces of the Hapsburgs in the letters "A. E. I. O. U." and whose policy was always guided by that principle of "divide et impera"—in plain English, "divide to rule." For to pit one nationality against another, engineering perpetual animosities, has been the Hapsburg method of maintaining the balance of empire.

Mr. Stead in his recent book on the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, speaking of Austrian patriotism, tells a story related to him by high Austrian official, of a man whose services had been of great use to the people of the monarchy and who was proposed as worthy of public reward. When that proposal was submitted to the Emperor Francis Joseph the man's patriotism was especially emphasized, to which his Majesty replied: "His Austrian patriotism may be all right—but is he a patriot for me?" This simple sentence indicates what the nature of Austrian patriotism is expected to be, a conception differing from that patriotism, devotion to country and people mean in all other countries of the world. "Is he a patriot for me?" is generally expressed in Austrian parlance as "he black-yellow?" meaning the imperial colors, as distinguished from the national colors, of each of the different races and fragments of races that compose the Austrian monarchy.

The Hapsburg monarchy, frightened with feudal traditions and ideas, is to-day far excellence—and solely among modern States—the survival of the medieval conception of a State as being a dynasty and its possessions, in opposition to the natural and present day conceptions of a State, as being the expression of a national will and entity.

Austria represents the idea which found its expression in the absolute State, the nineteenth century idea against which the American Declaration of Independence was the first trumpet blast of the assertion of the State as the possession of the whole people, and its government as the expression of that people's free will. That assertion of the rights of a people found echo first in France and then in the remotest corners of Europe—and was active in the making of modern Germany and modern Italy. Both these nations were unified through wars against Austria. It is an irony of fate that those nations, Italy and Germany, whose history only fifty years back is a close parallel of what is now happening concerning the Serbs, are to-day the allies of Austria.

The Hapsburg monarchy, the result of centuries of piecemeal conquests by the sword, comprises, in the north, four million and a half of Poles, who have not yet forgotten that there existed a Poland, and who hope and work for the restoration of their ancient kingdom. Further in the northeast, the monarchy is inhabited by four million Russians, who in sentiment and religion have their sympathy on the other side of the border, as the various trials for high treason only this last year amply showed. In the south-east there are about 800,000 Italians, belonging toward Rome. In the east the Hapsburg monarchy is inhabited by over three and a half millions of Rumanians, populating Transylvania, a country which is tucked close within the curved Rumanian kingdom, like a child in the lap of its mother.

Seven and a half million of Czechs and Slovaks inhabit the crownlands of Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and the northern part of Hungary. Nine million Magyars inhabit the crownlands of Hungary, a compact mass occupying the central plains of Hungary. There are ten million Germans in the western part of Austria, the crownlands of Lower and Upper Austria, Tyrol, Carinthia, Tyrol and along the borders of Bohemia—two millions of them are within Hungary in numerous small groups. In the south Austria-Hungary is inhabited by six and a half million of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the Slav nations of the Balkans. The Slovenes inhabit Carinthia and the borderlands of Austria-Hungary and the Rumanian Empire. The Serbs-Croats populate Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Banat and Bitchka in Hungary.

All these national groups, with the exception of the Czechs and Slovaks, fragments of adjoining mother nations, whose blood is in their veins, whose language they speak. All these nations were at one time or another conquered and subjected to Hapsburg rule.

exploitation of peoples for the glory of that dynasty, and only when they had won their liberty, they were able to rise to greatness as a nation. The Thirty Years War began when Bohemia tried to free herself from Hapsburg rule in 1618, and will this attempt of the Hapsburgs to-day to subjugate or exterminate the independent States of Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania be the signal of a new thirty years' war? Every nation of Europe took part in that war, and every nation of Europe would be a party on one side or another in the war of to-day. Will the Hapsburg lust for dynastic possessions and domain be once more the cause of untold misery and bloodshed, the laying waste of entire Europe and perhaps bringing war even across the seas? Europe after the Thirty Years War was a desert, of burned ruins, unworked fields, famine and pestilence—today our means of communications have brought the ends of the world together so that in regard to distances it is as the Europe of those days. In that age travel from one end of Germany to the other took the same time as to-day from the west coast of America across the Atlantic and Europe to the borders of Russia.

The fights for freedom of the Magyars are known; the name of Kossuth is familiar to every one. And familiar also are the names of Garibaldi and Mazzini, whose work in the cause of united and liberated Italy in its struggle against the Hapsburg domination is to-day repeated by those who strive for the erection of a united and free Serbian State, which includes the effort to free Serbia, Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina from Hapsburg rule and unite them with the free and happy kingdoms of Serbia.

The present war against Serbia is a last desperate and ruthless attempt to crush out of existence a brave and free people before the wounds they received in their victorious wars for the liberation of old Serbia have had time to heal. Twenty years ago a high Austrian official said to the writer:

"The existence of an independent Serbia and an independent Rumania is a perpetual menace to the Hapsburg destiny, and Austrian policy must tend to the conquest of Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania. When Austria, after the battle of Novara in 1849, left Sardinia independent it was one of the gravest errors ever committed at Vienna. Sardinia was able to make united Italy at Austria's expense, and though Italy is our ally to-day, that is true only so long as Austria can preserve Franco-Italian friction in the Mediterranean."

He also said that the conflict in Italy between the Vatican and the Quirinal and the efforts of anarchy against organized society are Austria's best allies in Italy.

During the Obrenovich regime at Belgrade it was said in Vienna that Austria could tolerate the existence of an independent Serbia only so long as Serbia kept the terms of King Milan's secret treaty of 1882 by which long as Austria made virtually a dependent of Austria, whose commands were conveyed to the Serbian Government by the Austrian Military Attaché at Belgrade. When King Alexander of Serbia undertook to free himself from that treaty which his father had made, Count Goluchowsky, the Austrian Foreign Minister, said in the month of March of that year to a Serbian Minister of State, one who afterward had intimate knowledge of the inner workings of the tragic events of Belgrade in 1903: "You Serbians are dissatisfied with Alexander; Austria has agreed to trust him. It is a matter of indifference to us what you do with your King; Austria exacts only that his successor shall not be a Montenegro or a Russian."

What more was said by the Austrian Foreign Minister on that occasion, though interesting to history, has no place in the present discussion. Subsequently, prior to the termination of the Obrenovich dynasty, when the terms of the traitorous Milan treaty became generally known to the Serbian people, many of whose ministers even had been unaware of its existence, their resentment knew no bounds, and no Serbian Government from that day to this could ever have ventured to consider for a moment the renewal in any guise of such relationship between Serbia and Austria.

The history of Austro-Serbian relations has since then been an uninterrupted series of attempts to enforce that subjection by threats, economic pressure, closing of frontiers to Serbian exports, inflammatory anti-Serb propaganda throughout the European press, and all known vexatious methods of war in peace.

The Serbian unification movement has its seat not in Serbia, but outside of it, in the hopes, the dreams and the desires of all the Serbs who form the unhappy population of those Austrian provinces making part of the Serb block within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The "Narodna Odbrana," the "Serbian National Defence" in Belgrade, is a Serbian society for the gathering of funds and the organization of the country for one purpose—the defence of the kingdom of Serbia against that eventually long foreseen by all Serbs, the attempt by the Hapsburgs to extend their rule over that kingdom. The Pan-Serbian movement is not in any guise of agitation or incitement from Serbia. The glaring contrast between the economic, social and political conditions in the Serb provinces in Austria-Hungary and the condition in the kingdom of Serbia furnishes the best propaganda. Herbert Vivian called his book on Serbia "The Poor Man's Paradise," and the most authoritative statistical fragments of the "Statesman's Yearbook" states: "There is no pauperism in Serbia in the sense in which it is understood in the West—the poorest have some sort of freehold property. There are few poor people in Belgrade, but neither their poverty nor their number has necessitated an institution like a workhouse. There is a free town hospital."

The Austrian rule is a complex and ruthless system of playing off one nationality against the other, rousing and fanning religious rivalries, animosities, using the soldiers of one nation to oppress and suppress the members of a differing race and creed, thus fostering legendary hatreds. During centuries by these methods a kind of working equilibrium has been main-

tained in the Hapsburg dominions. A State police, served by a network of spies closely enmeshing the intimate and domestic life of all its citizens, corrupt and unimaginable to the world and unknown elsewhere outside the Turkish police system under Abdul Hamid—a bureaucracy with its system of petty tyranny, the so-called "justa-mante" practice, combined with a tyrannous hierarchy of patronage, bending every branch of public service, the army and navy not excepted, to a degrading subservience, which has come to have a name, "Das Kriecherthum." These methods of government, mitigated by frequent suspension of constitutional guarantees, rule by police measures, military force and other forms of repression, are not able to trample out the national movement among the Serb population of the Austrian provinces. That movement, like the Irish shamrock, seems to flourish

there, though under foot its root is deep. The situation of to-day in many of its elements strikingly resembles that in Italy in 1848-49, when Sardinia (Piedmont) fought against Austria, single handed to create a united Italy, paralleling Serbia-Montenegro in opposition to Austria. Russian intervention on behalf of the two Serb States furnishes a counterpart to France's taking the sword for Sardinia against Austria in 1859, making possible within a few months the unification of Italy.

The period preceding that war in 1859 was characterized by many deeds of violence committed in the then Austrian provinces of Venice and Lombardy against the Austrian officials and soldiers. The assassination of those officials was of daily occurrence, and consequently disturbances in Venice and Lombardy necessitated severe repressive methods by the Austrian authorities, a state of affairs again the counterpart of what has been happening in recent years in the Serb provinces under Austrian sway, the suspension of constitutional guarantees in Croatia, assassinations and attempts on the lives of Austrian officials. So also recent nationalist propaganda for uniting Italy was a disturbing element during the Italian movement in the then Austrian provinces of Venice and Lombardy, exactly as to-day the national Serb propaganda for united Serbia is the disturbing and irreconcilable element in the Hapsburg dominions and the direct cause of Austria's present action against Serbia.

The complaint that the Italian irredentist propaganda had its headquarters in Sardinia and this propaganda itself with its avowed intent to revolt and sever the Italian provinces from Austria was the cause then of Austria's declaration of war against Sardinia. The world moves rapidly, for the same Emperor Francis Joseph made the proclamation accusing Sardinia in 1859 who to-day—in similar terms—accuses Serbia.

The role assumed to-day by Russia as the protector of Serbia was then assumed in regard to Italy by France, with this difference, that then France had no serious opposition to fear from any State, whereas as one of the States of the German Bund was at that time not overzealous to shoulder the gun for the Hapsburg, having already plans of her own for leading the German States in opposition to Austria to the creation of a united Germany. To-day Germany, opposing Serbian unification, faces Russia, thus ranging all Europe into the two camps of the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente.

These alliances, invented for the avoidance of military conflict, may be thrown into the greatest war the world has ever known, in comparison with which Napoleonic wars sink into insignificance and in which 16,000,000 fighting men will meet in battle array. That war might not remain confined in Europe but find reverberation in other parts of the globe. What its influence will be cannot be foreseen, nor when it will end. The great German Count von Moltke, victorious leader of the German armies in 1866 and 1870, gave it as his opinion that if the dreaded European Armageddon ever came its duration would not be months, but years, being limited only by the entire exhaustion of the nations engaged.

In the event of such a war no neutrals could enforce their neutrality. The trade of the Atlantic would be practically closed and cable communication with this continent probably cut, leaving the wireless as sole means of communication across the Atlantic. All other communication with Europe would have to be carried on across the Pacific and India, Russia and Egypt.

Before taking up the military situation between Austria and Serbia and between the different possible combatants, a word must be said on the military geographical situation in the north-east, which has a vital relation to the underlying causes of the war aside from all the interior causes in Austria.

Napoleon said: "War is a business of positions," and the military value of certain positions fix the geographical problems which link up the great interests of the great Powers and determine where the clash of interests demands the strife for the possession of those strategic positions giving the command of roads and markets.

The entrance from Europe to Asia, and from Asia to Europe, as well as the control of land roads and the sea road from the Mediterranean to Asia, is controlled by a series of strategic positions of enormous importance. They form two triangles, the apex of each of which lies in the position of Constantinople—that is, of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles—the other two points in Europe in the Balkans are Salonica and the so-called Serbian plateau, comprising the basin of Nish, the point of

junction of the two natural great highways of the Balkan peninsula. Nish lies in the centre of a small basin surrounded by mountains and is to-day the chief Serbian fortified camp. There the valley of the Morava opens the way north to the Danube and thence to the Hungarian plain. South from Nish the valley of the Morava and its natural prolongation, the valley of the Vardar, lead to Salonica. To the east the valley of the Nishava leads to the basin of Sofia, in Bulgaria, and through the valley of the Maritza, which is its prolongation, direct to Constantinople. Everywhere else the high ways through the Balkans lead through mountain regions and across high passes.

The Serbian plateau, embracing the basin of Nish, is therefore of supreme importance, as its possession opens up the door northward to Europe, southward to Salonica, eastward to Constantinople and thence to Asia.

In Asia, the triangle of positions commanding all the highways from the west to the interior of Asia is formed of Constantinople as the apex, the Armenian plateau and the position of Adana (the Cilician passes). That position was the theatre of the great battle of the man behind the gun and the spirit of the nation behind that man. It is the training, the spirit, the courage, the coolness of the man who yesterday, before mobilization, was perhaps going peacefully behind the plough or selling herring in tomato sauce across the Bosphorus, and today as a lawyer, sitting on the judicial bench, or as an instructor in the schools, colleges and universities teaching the "young idea how to shoot."

The Serbian army without the Montenegrin forces will consist of about twenty to twenty-two infantry divisions composed of line, territorial and reserve formations—each division of four infantry regiments, each regiment of a strength of from 4,000 to 5,000 men, one artillery regiment of thirty-six field pieces, and a cavalry regiment. Besides this the Serbians will have one cavalry division and several regiments of heavy howitzer batteries and mountain artillery. The total fighting force of the Serbian army will probably amount to about 500,000 men, of which the combatant force will be about 350,000 rifles and 600 pieces of artillery. During the Balkan war Serbia put into the field a force of 400,000 men. But since that war new formations of infantry have been created, Montenegrin will place in the field about 25,000 men with about sixty pieces of artillery.

The spirit and bravery of the Serbian and Montenegrin army have been proved during the two last Balkan wars. During those two wars the Serbian army did not lose a single battle or engagement. The spirit was such that several units which had lost all their officers in the battle and were commanded by non-commissioned officers did not lose their cohesion and gave excellent account of themselves. The quality and endurance of the army roused the admiration of the French and even German officers who had the occasion to see these troops. The French General Herr, commander of the French artillery of the "Armée de l'Est" on the German border, gave the highest praise to the qualities displayed by the Serbian army, especially to the Serbian artillery, the handling of guns, and using of that branch of the army by the superior commandment, and lauded especially the mutual confidence and coordination between the infantry and the artillery, which mutual con-

fidence and reliance allowed the Serbian artillery to give protection by its fire to its infantry advancing for a bayonet charge until the charging infantry masses were not further from the enemy's trenches than about fifty yards. This French General recognized that that feat was due only to that complete mutual confidence displayed between artillery and infantry, which also made the Serbian bayonet charges less costly in life than the charges made by the Bulgarian troops.

The Serbian army and also the Montenegrin army have already what generally every army pays dearly for in the beginning of a war, that is, war experience and absolute confidence in its leaders, from non-commissioned to commissioned officer and General. It is this confidence together with the war experience which will make the Serbian army a most formidable adversary to the Austrian army.

Writer Says Conglomeration of Peoples Are Ruled for Sole Benefit of Hapsburg Dynasty—Pitting One Nationality Against Another Emperor's Method of Maintaining Empire

below the age of 40 to 45, who have all in peace time had their training period of from two or three years under the colors of a national army. In time of war they are called to service to swell the ranks of their regimental formations from the ordinary peace footing to war footing. Where in time of peace the company may have only an effective of about sixty men and three officers, in time of war the company effective averages 220 men and five officers.

The Serbian army at the time of the Turkish war in 1912 had its companies brought up to 200 men. All European armies have the battalion formation of four companies, giving the battalion a war strength of from 800 to 1,200 men, as had the Serbian battalions in 1912. The regiments are formed by four battalions, giving the regiment a fighting strength of from 4,000 to 5,000 men. The higher organizations are the brigade,

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What spirit animates the Serbian army can be seen from despatches which only yesterday brought the news that women of Serbia and of Montenegro are taking up the rifle for the defence of their country, as they have often done in days gone by in the wars against the Turks.

The strength of the artillery regiments in the different European armies is about thirty-six to forty pieces of field guns of the average calibre of three inches. The cavalry regiments have an average of 600 horse combatants in all the European armies. The highest formations are the "operating armies," composed of divisions or army corps.

The armament in all European armies in regard to rifles and guns is practically of equal quality, the name of the maker or pattern of material mattering little. The Krupp, Schneider or Putiloff for artillery, or Mauser, Mannlicher, Lebel, "three line Nauger" rifle are all of equal merit as arms. Everything depends on the handling of them. In modern armies where there is obligatory service with modern armaments superiority lies only in the spirit of the man behind the gun and the spirit of the nation behind that man. It is the training, the spirit, the courage, the coolness of the man who yesterday, before mobilization, was perhaps going peacefully behind the plough or selling herring in tomato sauce across the Bosphorus, and today as a lawyer, sitting on the judicial bench, or as an instructor in the schools, colleges and universities teaching the "young idea how to shoot."

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Whatever measures the Austrian military authorities may take in this war against Serbia to prevent repetitions of such occurrences, even their possibility will surely have its influence on the conduct of the operations and the fate of the battle.

Since 1866 the Austrians have had no war experience. Officers and men in all branches of the army, infantry, cavalry or artillery, have now to first acquire that experience. What they will have to pay for it only the future can tell. It must be said, however, that where interior political elements have not entered to play a role, the Austrian army, officers and men, have always given a fine account of themselves in war, and the feats of bravery and valor are many in the annals of the Austrian army.

Austria's war on Serbia, apart from its surface significance, evident at the first glance as a move for the conquest of a neighboring empire, and apart from the Austrian situation in regard to Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania, possesses a meaning of deeper draught to the nations of the world.

Without Germany's support Austria could not have made this move and without that support cannot carry it to its ultimate result, it behooves the world to know Germany's motives in unleashing the dogs of war—wars to provoke a period of blood and terror such as was never before possible on the earth. Germany has not been surprised into this portentous act. For Germany alone of all the nations possesses a special Government department organized on the lines of a military general staff for the vigilant observation of the movements of the nations and for the exhaustive study and mastery in their smallest details and most irreducible elements of all matters bearing on Germany's foreign policy and international relations and interests.

A German official summing up Austria's value to Germany said: "Austria's real vocation is to be the door opener for Germany into Asia through the Near East. It has also been said in Berlin that the further Austria passes eastward the more will Vienna have to depend on Berlin."

But the preparation of the gigantic war machine also went forward without stop or let until Germany today the most compact and formidable of European States, doubly armed, exultant in national pride and ambition, strong with the sense of past victories and of an accruing might within. Fully prepared at last she lets the cannon roar. What she reaches out for she expects to get. What is she reaching for across Austria in this war, which if successful will make the Teuton master of the world and pour colonies of other nations into the lap of the German Empire like ripe apples falling into the gatherer's apron?

To France successful resistance to the Teutonic plan would sweep away much of the miasma of local and personal politics which cling to the banks of the Seine and which have made the deadly malarial of French national affairs. There would again be Frenchmen in France. France would for the first time become vividly and universally conscious of her far frontiers and might stretch them back again over lost provinces, or at least split off one of these lost provinces, the province of French sentiment. Morally France would gain immeasurably from the war, if she held her own.

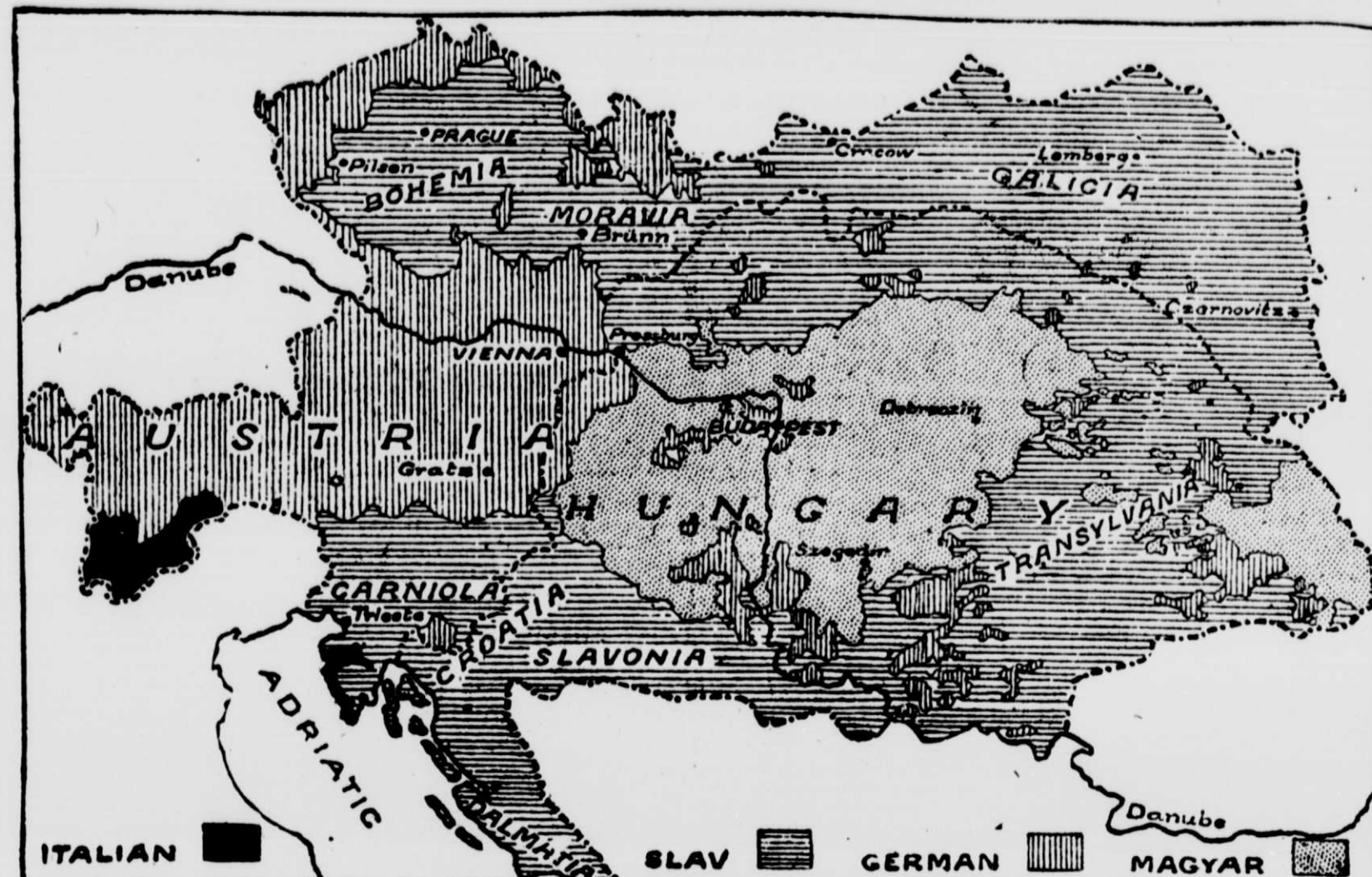
If England should enter actively into the fray her empire will automatically be federated at a single blow, for the various dominions and colonies would flock to the motherland in peril. And of England's success in crippling the German fleet she will have waded a disaster which has been long preparing and lying in wait on the high seas for her ships. If the Teuton wins in this great war little Britons will never more sing "Britannia rules the waves."

The stupendous mass of Russian tendency which wedged like a wedge toward Asia to the southern sea and toward India, per se, can never be a aim of Russia. The lands of her conquest must always be empty as she have been hitherto. A warm sea is paramount object, which when attained, her work for at least a century must be pioneering to build up civilization within her vast and sparsely populated territories. It is not often enough realized in the West, that further out a quest would only weaken the great Slav realm, and that the most brilliant Russian conquest in western Europe would disrupt the empire and bring the great fabric to the ground, reducing it back into warring provinces, and come the prey of conquest by other nations.

At this moment it is a curious turn of the wheel of fortune in the universe of the world that the Russian Empire should be centred in the Russian Czar. For the German Emperor has plainly shown in his willingness to back up Austria and risk making Europe one vast battlefield—perhaps one vast cemetery—that he has an axe to grind. He sees somewhere German gain in the fight.

It may be, too, that the Kaiser is not unmindful in his stand by certain serious phases of interior conditions within the German Empire—conditions which are due to appear in the affairs of States or of individuals when prosperity and riches reach an exorbitant tide. At such an epoch in a nation's development, entering in through the lax and softened tissues of luxury, bringing vice and self-indulgence, inducing cold selfishness and gradual neglect, if not scorn of earlier and austere ideals, the worms of destruction gnaw at the foundations of the mighty structure. Waves of blood wash away the old and harden the hearts of war, putting men's souls on trial, make them know once more that they have a soul. It is always seen that interior strife and dissensions disappear in the presence of national peril. Patriotism, or if you will, the instinct of self-preservation, obliterates all other considerations. Has the time come for this critical moment? Can Germany now remedy to be necessary in Germany?

If Nicholas II is able to stay the hand not only of Austria but of her backer Germany in the present peril, the great white Czar will have become the world's peace maker for 1914, and the proud position hitherto occupied by Berlin as Europe's arbiter will have departed from the banks of the Spree.



Map showing the distribution of races in Austria-Hungary.